

Special Education Training Cost High

SB THE FARMINGTON ENTERPRISE June 9, 1965

To Be Counselor At Dickinson Col.

Patricia Salisbury, a junior at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pa., was one of 40 students chosen as counselors for the 1965-66 year. Counselors are selected on the basis of character, scholarship, and qualities of leadership. Miss Salisbury's home is at 31746 Staman Circle Cr. in Farmington.

BY MARJORIE EICHER
Community Relations Coord.
Farmington Public Schools
The week of June 7 through June 14 has been declared Special Education Week in Oakland County, Farmington residents who visited Special Education classrooms in the Farmington School District during Open House last Monday discovered that the children in Oakland County's leadership in providing the best possible education for its crippled, blind, deaf, mentally retarded or emotionally disturbed children.

able education for its crippled, blind, deaf, mentally retarded or emotionally disturbed children. Citizens of Oakland County voted a half-mill tax levy eleven years ago to operate its Special Education Program on a county-wide basis, erasing school boundaries in order to avoid costly duplication of expense services. On June 14 they will be asked to levy an additional half-mill to meet the needs in Special Education of a growing school population and to expand a program that has proved its worth. To build and equip a Special Education classroom costs some \$20,000. Each Special Education Program costs, \$3-332 a year more to operate than the state subsidy pays. It costs twice as much to educate a mentally handicapped child as a child with normal mental ability. And it costs four times as much to educate a physically handicapped child as a non-handicapped child. FEW SCHOOL DISTRICTS are able to operate a well-rounded program for their handicapped children. Thus, when Oakland County initiated the Special Education Program in 1954, small districts that had no program for the handicapped child could be served, yet pay their fair share of the cost of the program through the county tax. And districts like Farmington that derive their income largely from residential taxes could offer a full educational opportunity to their handicapped children.

Under the 11-year-old program, the state pays two-thirds of the cost of Special Education and the Oakland County Intermediate School District pays the other one-third. IN FARMINGTON, WE provide Special Education classrooms for almost 200 children. Some of these children come from neighboring districts. In turn, Farmington handicapped children attend Orthopedic Kindergarten classes, and Braille classes in Berkeley and Royal Oak School Districts. But the majority of the children served by the Special Education Program — some 1,100 this year — are educated in their regular classrooms and receive additional help from Special Education teachers. The local program is strengthened by 24 clinical and consulting services that operate at Oakland County School Office. In 11 years, the programs of Special Education in the local districts have grown from 88 to 393. Farmington operates 22 of these — more than any other district except Pontiac and Royal Oak. THE ORIGINAL HALF-mill levy is inadequate, however, to meet our future needs. In the county it is estimated that 73 new programs are needed to serve the number of school children which has doubled since 1954. In Farmington we need one

more classroom for the educable mentally handicapped, another classroom for the trainable mentally retarded, one more orthopedic classroom, and another classroom for the deaf. We need teachers for these classrooms, another physical therapist, one more visiting teacher and two more speech correctionists. Presently, Farmington does not have a perceptual development program. We need two. This is for children who have faulty perception—though they have good measurable intelligence, they do not achieve in school for they are unable to perceive normally. Classrooms for these children are limited to serve 8 to 10 children. Children served

are usually between six and ten years old. When they have acquired some academic skills and the means to learn despite their handicap, they return to the regular school classroom. As the perceptually handicapped child builds skills and understanding of his problem and develops tolerance to group activities, his program moves in pattern toward that of the regular classroom he will eventually rejoin. MORE REVENUE IS needed to meet the need for expansion of the Special Education program and to continue to provide quality programs to handicapped children in Farmington and Oakland County. The Oakland County Board of Education, supported by the

Farmington Board of Education and other local school boards has directed that the voters be asked to increase the Public Act 18 tax which provides for Special Education from one-half mill to one mill on June 14. For Farmington property owners it is estimated that the tax increase will amount to about \$4 for a home with a market value of \$20,000. In financial terms this may mean the difference in cost to the community of a self-supporting person or one who as an adult becomes dependent upon the community. With adequate Special Education and vocational training, our experience in this past decade has proven that most handicapped students can become self-supporting adults, making a real contribution to the community that supported their Special Education.

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MICHAEL SULLIVAN, 11, pushes his buddy Joe Cote, 9 on the playground at Eagle School. Both boys are Special Education students in Eagle's Orthopedic classrooms.

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